



## Husserl and the Problem of Idealism

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# THE JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY

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## HUSSERL AND THE PROBLEM OF IDEALISM

THE merits of a philosopher, that is, his truly philosophical merits, not the merits he may have as a teacher or *Anreger*, should not be defined by the "results" he has achieved in his thinking. The idea that a philosopher must produce a fixed set of irrefutable findings, an idea which Husserl himself certainly would have shared, presupposes that all the tasks he sets for himself can actually be fulfilled, that there can be an answer to every question he raises. This assumption, however, is disputable. It is possible that there are philosophical tasks which, although arising necessarily in a coherent process of thinking, can *not* be fulfilled; thus, they lead to an impasse which is not the fault of the philosopher, nor an accident which can be accounted for only by the contingencies of the history of philosophy, but which has its roots in inherent antagonisms of the problem itself. It is in this connection that I wish to discuss the problem of idealism. One might define idealism here as a philosophy which tries to base such notions as reality or truth on an analysis of consciousness. It starts with the general assumption that in the last instance there can be established an identity between the object and the subject. It was the fate of idealistic philosophy that all the notions which it derived from the sphere of *Erlebnis* led to a deadlock. That can be illustrated by the notion of givenness (*Gegebenheit*), the notion of immediate inner experience. In the last period of his development Husserl has critically and at length dealt with this notion. In his book, *Formale und transzendente Logik*, he says: "Even here, that is, in the case of inner experience, where, in a way that must be described more precisely and discriminately, it is meaningful to say that the immanent datum really exists in the constitutive experience, it must be warned against the error of assuming that the datum qua object is fully constituted in this its real occurrence" (p. 251). On the other hand, it is quite obvious that no analyses of consciousness could dispense with the notion of givenness such as it occurs in Locke's theory of sensations. One must even concede that in a way the concept of the immediately given is much closer to the psychological operations and acts of

the human mind than are the highly differentiated and mediated notions of Kant's transcendental synthesis or Husserl's theory of evidence as a process. The fact that such a notion as that of givenness can not be ultimately upheld is due not so much to the fact that it does not square with certain experiences; it leads into the difficulty described by Husserl because he assumes that the ultimate source of truth is the unity of consciousness. It is characteristic that the objections Husserl raises against any notion of givenness refer to the function of the given within that unity and to the relativity that any givenness necessarily assumes within the context of that unity. Clearly, such analyses as Husserl's criticism of givenness produce no results in the current sense of the word; Husserl is not able to replace the notion of givenness by a more adequate term, nor is he able to express theoretical hypotheses like the intentional process of evidence in terms of elementary facts illustrating such a process. The value of the whole procedure, however, may consist in its turning against the idealist presupposition of the ultimate identity of subject and object. It appears to me that Husserl's philosophy was precisely an attempt to destroy idealism from within, an attempt with the means of consciousness to break through the wall of transcendental analysis, while at the same time trying to carry such an analysis as far as possible. The few analyses here selected from Husserl's philosophy will illustrate this attempt on the part of Husserl to break out of the idealist tradition and the difficulties he encounters thereby because he never fully freed himself from the presuppositions of idealism.

I realize that such a phrase as that of the "inherent antagonism of the problem itself" may sound objectionable and that a method that dwells on the movement of notions, including the above-mentioned notion of givenness, has a touch of Hegelian speculation. This suspicion Husserl certainly would have shared, for he boasted of never having understood one sentence by Hegel and once, when discussing the fact that Hegel rejected the principle of contradiction, he referred to Hegel as one of those cases where it is hard to draw the distinction between a genius and lunacy. It seems to me all the more interesting that Husserl himself involuntarily gave an example of the Hegelian method. There was no other philosopher in his time in whose thought terms like "dynamics" or "process" played so small a rôle as in Husserl's, except for his last period. He used to interpret thinking not as action but as looking at things, that is, quietly facing them like pictures in a gallery. He did not want to interconnect thoughts by spiritual processes, but to detach them from each other as neatly and clearly as possible. From his mathematical beginnings to the very end he was concerned

only with the justification of *vérités éternelles*, and for the passing phenomena he held all the contempt of the classical rationalist. In brief, he was the most static thinker of his period and it is this fact that brings him into so fundamental an opposition to Bergson, with whom he is often compared because of his concept of ideation or *Wesensschau*, which is often associated with Bergson's intuition. Still, his thought has developed in antithetic form, and by implication ends up with an antithesis to the whole sphere of thinking to which his philosophy itself belongs. Husserl started as a pupil of the Austrian philosopher, Franz Brentano, to whom he bore a certain similarity throughout his philosophical life. Brentano's philosophy was nourished from two sources: from the Aristotelian tradition of the Roman Catholic church and from English empiricism. He tried all his life to blend these sources into one coherent set of thoughts, that is to say, he tried to combine a strictly ontological objective apriorism with a largely psychological epistemology. This attempt in Brentano's case had from the very beginning a strongly anti-Kantian tendency. For Brentano, the *a priori* elements of truth were not constituted subjectively, but were of a strictly objective character, and the same point was maintained in his moral philosophy, particularly in his famous essay, *On the Origin of Moral Knowledge (Vom Ursprung sittlicher Erkenntnis)*, where he tried to characterize the good in terms of right and wrong, i.e., in terms of the objective rightness of the love or hatred related to the idea in question. Paradoxical as it may sound, it is this representation of the objective nature of the *a priori* which makes him inclined to empiricist psychology. If the essences to which our knowledge is related are given objectively and not constituted by our process of thinking, the process of thinking loses its Kantian dignity and its compelling character: it can be treated on a strictly empirical basis. Brentano, however, did not satisfy himself with a lofty combination of dogmatism and scepticism versus criticism. He tried to unify the ontological and empirical trends of his thinking and it is this attempt of unification which probably made his influence so considerable upon a whole generation of Austrian thinkers. In order to convey this synthesis he took up an old scholastic concept which, so far as I know, had been developed for the first time by Duns Scotus. It is the concept of intentionality, aiming at certain psychical acts—"experiences"—which are characterized fundamentally as having a "meaning" which transcends them. In the introduction of this concept one may see a radical empiricist tendency tilting over into its opposite. For this view, the Humian doctrine that ideas are just somewhat weaker and modified impressions, is not tenable. When analyzing those ex-

periences which classical empiricism calls "ideas," we are entitled to interpret them in terms of those experiences which they are *not*, namely, of impressions. Remaining on a strictly descriptive level, we can only say that they mean something which they are not themselves. E.g., if I now think of the toothache I had yesterday, then my present experience, that is, the act of thinking, is different from what it aims at, namely, the toothache; whereas, on the other hand, in a certain sense the toothache I had yesterday is mentally implied in my present act of thinking as its intentional object, without any reference to its transcendent reality or unreality. Intentionality became later one of the principal instruments of Husserl. He took over from his teacher Brentano the concept as well as the idea of the objective character of essences and a desire to combine a doctrine of objective essences with an analysis of subjective processes of thinking. Husserl started as a mathematician. The material of his thought was detached from the very beginning as much as possible from the relativity of subjective reflection, a material the objectivity of which stood beyond any possible doubt. Still, under Brentano's influence he tried to apply the psychological epistemology of his time to this realm and to give in his philosophy of arithmetic a psychological foundation for arithmetic. An antithetic motive in his thinking made itself felt for the first time when some of his mathematical critics made him aware of the necessary failure of such an attempt. It is significant that when speaking about it for the first time the Hegelian term "*Übergang*" (transition) creeps into Husserl's language: "As soon as the transition from the psychological interconnections of thinking to the logical unity of the content of thought (the unity of the theory) was to be made, no sufficient continuity and clarity could be achieved" (*Logische Untersuchungen*, Vol. I, Preface, p. vii). From this time on, Husserl tried to emancipate mathematics, and not only mathematics but logical validity as a whole, from psychological reflection and to justify it as a realm of its own. The tremendous influence Husserl had in his time is due to this attempt: an attempt to reconquer the objectivity of truth as against relativistic psychologism. One ought to know that during the early nineties in Germany no philosophy except Neo-Kantianism was accepted which did not declare itself as psychological. Why has Husserl's *Logische Untersuchungen* made this tremendous impression? The answer is this: the tendencies by which he became an enemy of the psychologistic positivism of his time—which of course, is something very different from modern logical positivism—have their roots in positivism itself. Even in his mature period, in his *Ideas*, Husserl maintains "if by 'positivism' we are to mean the absolute unbiased grounding of all science,

on what is positive, i.e., what can be primordially apprehended, then it is *we* who are the genuine positivists" (*Ideas*, transl. by Gibson, p. 86). That is to say, if he criticized the psychological approach to mathematics and hence to logic, his motive was not one of metaphysical speculation, but he found that when analyzing scientifically the nature of mathematical truth such as this truth is given in positive mathematical science, it could not possibly be reduced to the psychological acts of thinking related to those truths. When Husserl's philosophy emphasized more and more the concept of essence as against the notion of facts, the source for this emphasis is a scientific one. Husserl thought he was insisting upon facts themselves, namely, the "fact" of mathematical truths as ideal unities unrelated to any factual existence. These truths themselves have to be regarded as facts in the sense of something given which has to be accepted as it is and can not be modified by any explanatory hypotheses. If Husserl himself did not want primarily to save a higher world, whatever this may imply, nevertheless his philosophy became effective in the intellectual German post-War atmosphere as a method to re-establish some kind of hierarchy of values by means of positive science itself. What he actually wanted to show was that a truly scientific and enlightened method trained by mathematical procedure could not possibly content itself with the psychological method and had to look for a different justification. For him the psychological foundation of logic is hypothetical, speculative, and in a way even metaphysical.

His struggle against psychologism does not mean the reintroduction of dogmatic prejudices, but the freeing of critical reason from the prejudices contained in the naïve and uncritical religion of "facts" which he challenged in its psychological form. It is this element of Husserl's philosophy in which I see even today its "truth."

I attribute to this point such significance that I wish to show more concretely what actually went on and to reproduce the central argument of the first volume of the *Logische Untersuchungen*, although this volume compared with mature phenomenological philosophy shows Husserl *in statu pupillari*. This central argument is pointed against the assumption that the laws of formal logic as "laws of thinking" are identical with "natural laws" or the causal laws according to which the psychical processes of thing are interconnected. He insists that the causal norms, according to which actual thinking must proceed in such a way as to agree with the ideal norms of logic, are by no means identical with these ideal norms themselves (*cf. Logische Untersuchungen*, Vol. I, p. 68). "If a thinking being, a person, were constituted psychologically in

such a way that he could not make contradictory judgments within a single trend of thought or could not draw any inference contradictory to the *modi* of the syllogism, this would by no means imply that the logical principles, such as the principle of contradiction, are natural laws by which this psychological constitution of the individual, who is not able to think otherwise than according to these laws, can possibly be explained." Husserl makes this clear by the example of an adding machine. "The set-up of the interconnection of the outstanding figures is by mechanical laws, 'laws of nature' regulated according to the meaning of the arithmetical principles postulated. Nobody, however, would refer to arithmetical instead of mechanical laws to explain the working of the machine physically." The realm of psychical acts with which Husserl here compares the machine can no more be derived from the realm of logical norms than the mechanical working of the adding machine can be explained by the mathematical rules according to which the figures appear. As Husserl says: "The psychologistic logicians disregard the essential and eternally unbridgeable differences between ideal law and real law, between normative regulation and causal regulation, between logical and real necessity, between logical reason and real reason [*logischer Grund und Realgrund*]. No thinkable gradation is able to mediate between the ideal and real" (*loc. cit.*). The impossibility of a psychological reduction of logical truth leads Husserl to a total severing of the real and the ideal because according to his view it is impossible to link them up without making assumptions which have no possible basis within the meanings of logical and mathematical principles themselves. It is possibly the most extreme *χωρισμός* which has ever been suggested since Plato—but rooted in a very severe concept of scientific truth which wants to keep pure mathematics free from every pollution by the empirical—even by thinking, inasmuch as thinking implies a psychological act.

Yet, Husserl could tolerate this sort of *χωρισμός*, this extreme and irreconcilable dualism of the real and the ideal, as little as any former philosopher. The second step of his antithetic development is the attempt to bring them together. Now obviously the only way in which the "real," the psychological reality of man, and the ideal, the absolute validity of logical and mathematical truth, are interconnected, is the very same principle which was rejected as a means of justification in the first volume of the *Logische Untersuchungen*, namely, the process of thinking. For the ideal truths are truths of thinking and of thinking only. There is no mathematical or logical proposition which could be conceived of otherwise than in terms of possible thought. On the other hand, thinking means

human thinking and we know of no thought which would not presuppose actual psychical acts of thinking of actual living individuals. Hence, Husserl's philosophy in its next stage had to focus the nature of thinking itself in its ambiguity between the real and the ideal. Husserl has often been blamed for having reintroduced psychology in the second volume of the *Logische Untersuchungen*, which bears the subtitle *Untersuchungen zur Phaenomenologie und Theorie der Erkenntnis* (*Inquiries concerning the Phenomenology and Theory of Knowledge*). I do not want to decide the question whether Husserl actually has relapsed into psychology. The second volume of the *Logische Untersuchungen* is the most difficult part of his work and there are long passages in it where even the most patient reader will find it very hard to establish an unambiguous meaning, particularly because in this book Husserl does not distinguish quite clearly between actual descriptions of the structure of thinking and terminological discussions, especially the disentangling of equivocations of some of the main terms of current epistemology. This may contribute considerably to the difficulty of deciding how far these analyses are actually psychological ones again. It occurs to me, however, that similar difficulties have been encountered by the Kantian philosophy, particularly in the deduction of the categories in the different versions of the first and second editions of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. It appears to me that the sphere of the factual and the sphere of thought are involved in such a way that any attempt to separate them altogether and to reduce the world to either of those principles is necessarily doomed to failure. It is most likely that the very abstraction which the contrast of the real and the ideal implies, is derivative to such a degree that we are not entitled to regard this abstraction as a basic principle which could be attributed to the nature of being itself. Whoever tries to reduce the world to either the factual or the essence, comes in some way or other into the position of Münchhausen, who tried to drag himself out of the swamp by his own pigtail. One must concede that Husserl, in his Münchhausen attempts to dispense with the factual altogether, while still treating the ideal as something given, as only the fact can be given, was faced by insurmountable difficulties. I shall not enter the labyrinth of the second volume of the *Logische Untersuchungen*. The most influential though most involved of these *Untersuchungen*, however, is the last, called *Elemente einer phänomenologischen Aufklärung der Erkenntnis* (*Elements of a Phenomenological Enlightenment of Knowledge*). It is actually supposed to provide that "bridge" between the ideal and the real. It tries to establish a method of knowledge, by which we should be able to be immediately aware of those logical objec-



tivities or ideal units. This bridge, this method, by which we could "think" ideal realities (*Ideale Tatbestände*) that are not produced by us and still get their absolute validity into rational evidence, Husserl calls categorial intuition (*kategoriale Anschauung*). This notion which is fundamental to all later phenomenology, particularly that of Hedwig Conrad-Martius, Scheler, but by implication also Heidegger, and which later was called *Wesensschau*, intuition of essences, or, as Gibson translates it, "essential insight," was actually developed only in the last *Untersuchung* of the second volume. In Husserl's *Ideas* this notion is more or less taken for granted and treated only in the introductory and somewhat cryptic first chapter. Those who hear Husserl's name probably think first of all of this notion. It leads into the very center of the problem of idealism in Husserl's philosophy. It seems to me to be all the more advisable to dwell upon it since Husserl's so-called main work, the *Ideas*, is available in an English translation, whereas the *Logische Untersuchungen*, where the theory of categorial intuition is unfolded, has never been translated.

To be sure, Husserl was an exceedingly cautious man. The notion of categorial intuition which made him both famous and notorious as the renovator of metaphysical speculation, plays only a limited rôle in the last *Untersuchung* and after it has been introduced it becomes limited and revoked to such an extent that actually nothing of it is left. His whole theory of intuition was from the very beginning intended to be much more harmless than it actually proved to be. If there were alive in Husserl some authoritarian drives, the desire to vindicate for truth a superhuman objectivity which must merely be recognized, there was also the contrary alive in him, a very critical attitude with an almost exaggerated fear in committing himself to any truth which could not be regarded as eternal and absolutely certain. Husserl was the rationalist of irrationalism and the paradoxical quality about him is revealed by his theory of categorial intuition.

The paradoxical structure of a thinking that contents itself with a mere "finding" of truths as of something pre-given, derives in a certain sense from the nature of Husserl's logical absolutism in the first volume of the *Logische Untersuchungen*. One could say that the doctrine of categorial intuition is the necessary consequence of logical absolutism with respect to the thinking subject. Thus even in the first volume we can find a passage which in fact contains the whole doctrine: "May he be deceived by psychologistic arguments, who ever remains bound to the sphere of vague general considerations. The mere looking at [*Hinblick auf*] any of the logical principles, at its true meaning and the evidence by which it is apper-

ceived as truth in itself, is apt to dispense with a remaining illusion" (*Logische Untersuchungen*, Vol. I, p. 64). It is the thesis of the theory of categorial intuition that "truths in themselves," ideal items as they are, pre-given objectively, become evident by "mere looking at them" (*blossem Hinblick*). These truths are called *Sachverhalte*. The difficulty of any translation of that term points in the direction of the difficulty of the problem itself. I translate it here by "item," this being the most abstract term available which does not carry in itself any implication as to the factual nature of the *Sachverhalte* in question. The literal meaning of the word "*Sachverhalt*," however, is relatedness of facts. What is meant by it here is actually something highly paradoxical. On the one hand, it means something like a fact inasmuch as it is something given, something which we do not build ourselves, something which we can not alter, something over which we have no power, in short, something which may remind you of the English phrase about stubborn facts. On the other hand, however, these *Sachverhalte* are nothing less than facts: they are merely ideal laws like the principles of mathematics. It does not matter for arithmetical rules after the model of which Husserl's notion of *Sachverhalt* is built, whether there are any real, "worldly" objects which can be counted according to these rules. They describe mere possibilities of such objects, the validity of which is by no means affected by the reality to which they may be related. Husserl says: "The *Sachverhalt* is related to the more or less 'giving' act of becoming aware of it as the sensual object is related to sense perception. We feel impelled to go even so far as to say, the *Sachverhalt*, the purely logical ideal truth, is related to its intellectual perception as the sensual object to the sense perception" (*Logische Untersuchungen*, Vol. II, 2, p. 140). The rationalist Husserl wants by means of categorial intuition to vindicate for the *vérités de raison* that character of immediate givenness which appears to the positivist Husserl as the only legal source of knowledge. On the one hand, he assumes Bolzano's "propositions in themselves," that is, the pure unities of validity; on the other hand, he assumes the region of consciousness from which all possible justification of insight derives, the sphere of the given, of experience, of "*Erlebnis*." These two spheres are connected only by intentionality. The *vérités de raison* are "meant" symbolically, signified by actual experiences. Intention, according to Husserl, is apt to lead to the *vérités* as such without subjectivizing or relativizing them in the least. The being in itself of the *vérités* is supposed to "appear." They are not interpreted as being produced by subjective reflection or abstraction, but as something self-given and perceptible. However, they shall not be made

to pay the penalty of being merely factual and contingent, a penalty which the "simple" sensual perception must always pay. Categorical intuition is the *deus ex machina* in Husserl's philosophy, by which it tries to reconcile the contradictory motives of his philosophy, namely, his desire to save the absolute objectivity of truth and his acceptance of an imperative need of positivistic justification.

Now, such a paradoxical achievement can not be expected from the notion of intentionality, from mere "meaning." For the notion of intentionality implies only that we can mean the objective essences in the stream of our consciousness; it implies nothing about their being. To mean something, to mean even ideal items such as arithmetical sentences, is certainly not identical with being evident. One can mean something wrong as well. Husserl, therefore, supplements intentionality by its "intuitive fulfillment" (*intuitive Erfüllung*). "A statement which first functions merely symbolically may later be followed by a more or less adequate intuition of what is meant by the statement. If this takes place, we experience a 'consciousness' of fulfillment *sui generis*. The act of pure meaning, pure intention, finds its fulfillment in the representing act of intuition as if the intention were actually directed toward some aim or design" (*Logische Untersuchungen*, Vol. II, 2, p. 32). The core of the whole doctrine of categorical intuition is the theory of fulfillment. Let us take an example which is not quite as abstract as most of Husserl's doctrines: "National Socialism and Fascism are not the only possible forms of government." This is an intention, that is to say, I make a sequence of those words by means of a single meaning. But there may be persons to whom this sentence, although they understand its meaning, is not evident. They will have to try to "fulfill" it by an intuition of its total meaning. Some of its elements, e.g., the governments mentioned in the sentence, may be "fulfilled" in the last analysis by sense perception. With other elements of the proposition, like "and," "not," "the only possible," this is not the case. Husserl is worried about these elements. But in his search for the objectivity of the truth of the proposition he rejects the idea that they might be functions of our own thinking. He wants them to be more than mere subjective elements. He attributes to the meaning of such terms a fulfillment *sui generis*. He says that they can be fulfilled by an intuition of their own, a nonsensual yet immediate awareness.

"The 'an' and the 'that,' the 'and' and the 'or,' the 'if' and the 'thus,' the 'all' and the 'non,' the 'something and nothing,' the forms of quantity, etc. all these are significant elements of propositions, but their objective correlates [*gegenständliche Korrelate*], if

we are at all entitled to attribute to them such correlates, can not be found in the sphere of real objects, which means the same as in the sphere of objects of a possible sense perception" (*Logische Untersuchungen*, Vol. II, 2, p. 139). The concept of categorial intuition finds the following extreme formula: "If we ask, wherein do the categorial forms of intentions find their fulfillment if not in the perception of intuition in that narrower sense which we hinted at in speaking about sensibility [*Sinnlichkeit*], the answer is clearly prescribed to us by the above considerations. First of all, any representation of any example of a faithful proposition about a preceding perception puts it beyond doubt that actually *also the forms find their fulfillment*, just as we presupposed it as a matter of course." Or: "There must be an act, an experience which does to the categorial elements of intention the same services which is granted to the merely material elements of intention by simple sense perception" (*loc. cit.*, p. 142). Such acts which do the analogous service to words like "so" and "and," which is done to words like "green" or "red" when we have a sense perception of something green or red, induce Husserl to call the evidence of the whole sentence "categorial intuition." A statement can become evident only if not alone the material in it but the whole of its meaning can be fulfilled by perceptions. Husserl, strictly speaking, does not arrive at the categorial intuitions by a phenomenological method, he does not describe any actual acts of categorial intuition, but he deduces them in a somewhat hypothetical form. One could almost say, he derives them rather by a discussion of terms than by viewing any matter itself. Under the title of analysis of meanings, Husserl and some of his disciples display an odd confidence that they are able to find the truth by looking at the mere intentions of words. Though Husserl is always on the lookout for equivocations, he has here fallen victim to an equivocation himself: The term "categorial intuition" is ambiguous in itself. The character of immediacy which Husserl attributes to the awareness of the *Sachverhalt*, or the alleged ideal reality behind such terms as "so" and "and," is nothing but the immediacy of the act of actual judging. It may be formulated as follows: The judgment, viewed subjectively, is an act, an experience, and as such it is something immediately given. To judge or to become aware of a judged *Sachverhalt* is the same, or more precisely, the second expression is a metaphorical circumscription of the first one. There is no second act of becoming aware of what one has judged in addition to the actual judging itself, unless of course one reflects on the judgment. Such a reflection, however, would necessarily transcend the "immediacy" of the actual act of judgment which for itself would become the *object* of

such a reflection. That immediacy of judgment, however, is implied by Husserl's notion of becoming aware of the *Sachverhalt*. But to become aware of a *Sachverhalt* means for Husserl also to reassure oneself of the truth of the judgment. The equivocation within the term "giving act of becoming aware of something" (*loc. cit.*, p. 140), "*gebender Akt der Gewährwerdung*," is strictly this, (1) to become aware of a *Sachverhalt*, to achieve the synthesis of judgment, and (2) to bring the truth of this judgment to absolute evidence. None of the meanings of the expression, however, can possibly be interpreted as categorial intuition. The synthesis of judging is no categorial intuition because, according to Husserl, judgment in the sense of spontaneous thinking just requires its fulfillment by some sort of intuition. Reflection, however, being the necessary condition of that evidence which according to Husserl is guaranteed by categorial intuition, is as little intuitive as it is immediate. Reflection puts the *Sachverhalt* into relation with other *Sachverhalte*: its own result is a new categorization. Even if reflection in the last analysis would go back to sensual, perceptible elements, it would contain in itself qua reflection nonperceptible, conceptual forms. Husserl calls the mediate *immediate* because he believes in the datum: he wants to detach the mediate, that is, the *vérités de raison*, from the mere possibility of being fallacious. In turn he attributes to the immediate a generality and necessity which can be obtained only by mediation, by the progress of reflection.

One often speaks of the platonic realism of Husserl. This realism, of course, is accompanied in Husserl's writing by an extreme epistemological idealism: that is to say, the essences to which he attributes that sort of platonic reality are essences totally devoid of any relation to the real, to facts, to the world constituted within time and space. When closely observing Husserl's attempt to reconcile his quasi-platonic realism of essences with an idealist theory of thinking, one notices that he relapses into what might be called a naïve realism of logic. He hypostasizes the logical principles which are actually valid only in relation to thinking, just as if they were things of the second power. If they are things, however, thinking, directed toward them, degenerates into their merely passive reception. Husserl has thrown back the Kantian notion of the spontaneity of thinking to the level of mere passivity. To Husserl thinking is affected by the *vérités de raison* in a way rather analogous to that in which Kant thought of our senses as affected by transcendent things-in-themselves. Kant ran into difficulties with his notion of transcendent things-in-themselves while attempting to ground our experience on an exclusive analysis of the forms of con-

consciousness. I hope to have shown that the difficulties into which Husserl runs by maintaining a kind of things-in-themselves of the second power, that is to say, his notion of truths independent of their subjective constitution and his reducing the thinking of those truths to a merely passive intuition, are not smaller than those encountered by Kant. In other words, the whole idea of categorial intuition, which had such extraordinary consequences not only in Germany, but for the whole of modern philosophy, is not actually a phenomenological discovery. The doctrine of categorial intuition is a *tour de force* for bringing together the analysis of consciousness and the being in itself of truth.

Why had Husserl to take refuge in such a *tour de force*? It may be worth while to point out that his whole philosophy is full of notions as paradoxical as that of categorial intuition; even in his last writings one finds notions such as that of the contingent *a priori*, or that of the *Eidos Ego*, which means a strictly individual, personal consciousness which is nevertheless supposed to be absolutely non-factual, a pure essence, whilst not derived from any plurality of individual consciousnesses. These paradoxical notions definitely point in one direction. Husserl has set for himself a task which, in his terms, is insoluble. The paradoxical terms are but the expression of the insolubility of his problem. Roughly his problem may be stated as follows: he rebels against idealist thinking while attempting to break through the walls of idealism with purely idealist instruments, namely, by an exclusive analysis of the structure of thought and of consciousness. It is essential that Husserl, when turning against psychologism, attributes to this term a much broader meaning than what is usually understood by it. His attack upon psychologism is directed against any notion of a subject, however abstract it may be, that is derived from "worldly" existence and presupposes a "world." For him, even the Cartesian Ego is still a "bit of world" because it is gained by a process of limitation of our worldly experiences to the "undubitable" and not, as Husserl wants it, by "a changed attitude" which is concerned with the *sum cogitans* not as a reality, but as a mere possibility. If Kant speaks of "our" consciousness and if for him the functioning of the intellectual apparatus is bound to factual, real impressions, without which the categories are empty forms devoid of validity, then surely for Husserl, Kant would be a psychologist, too. Indeed, Husserl, in his last publication in the periodical *Philosophia*, has put the blame of psychologism on the whole history of the modern mind since the Renaissance. In other words, his attack was directed not only against positivism and empiricism, but against idealism, and his effect was largely that of an anti-idealist philosopher.

It became such an attack by the slogan "*Zu den Sachen*," "Back to the subject-matter itself," and the motive of his insistence upon notions such as intuition is in fact this anti-idealist desire of getting back to the materials themselves. He wants to destroy every hypothetical superstructure of the pure acts of thinking and meanings, every arbitrary construction which derives from systematical bias. His campaign is directed, if I may say so, against any philosophical ornamentation, against anything that does not belong to the matter itself. The spontaneity of the mind which for the great systems of German idealism is the source of all truth, is for him mainly a source of speculative fallacy. He is anti-idealist in this specific sense.

But the slogan "*Zu den Sachen*" implies in Husserl's philosophy the greatest difficulties. He wants to go to the *Sachen* not merely for avoiding the fallacies of arbitrary conceptual construction, but for getting hold of an absolutely secure, unshakable, unchallengeable truth. This desire, however, to get hold of the Absolute and, in the last analysis, to deduce with an absolute stringency everything from one absolute point, is an idealist desire, dwelling in the refuge of an anti-idealist philosophy. Once attempting to build up a philosophy of the Absolute, he is thrown back to the same principle of the Ego, the spontaneity of which he has rejected. It is clear that the ultimate notions to which his philosophy resorts are idealistic ones. The principle of principles by which, according to Husserl, the matters themselves can be grasped, is in Husserl's own words the following: "that every primordial dator intuition is a source of authority [*Rechtsquelle*] for knowledge, that whatever presents itself in 'intuition' in primordial form (as it were in its bodily reality) is simply to be accepted as it gives itself out to be, though only within the limits in which it then presents itself" (*Ideas*, p. 92). Behind this principle there is nothing but the old idealist principle that the subjective data of our consciousness are the ultimate source of all knowledge, and that therefore any fundamental philosophical analysis must be an analysis of consciousness. On the other hand, the opposite pole to givenness, the pure notion, or what Husserl calls the essence, obtains its justification in Husserl by the same reduction to pure subjective consciousness, being freed from everything factual and contingent. The doctrine of essence which was regarded as the main anti-idealist stroke of Husserl's finally reveals itself as the summit of idealism: the pure essence, the objectivity of which seems to spurn any subjective constitution, is nothing but subjectivity in its abstractness, the pure function of thinking, the "I think" in the sense of the Kantian unity of consciousness.

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